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1969/05/31



Department of State

TELEGRAM

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'69 MAY 31 PM 11:54

SECRET

CONTROL: 7524Q

RECD: May 31, 1969

4:30 P.M.

OO RUEHC RUEHCR

DE RUEHCR 8112 1512000

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O 312000Z MAY 69

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4237

INFO RUEHCR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE 3891

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SECRET SECTION 1 OF 11 PARIS 8112

NODIS/PARIS MEETINGS/PLUS

DELTO 1793

SUBJECT: REPORT OF MEETING WITH LE DUC THO AND HA VAN LAU
SAIGON DELIVER AT OPENING OF BUSINESS

1. I MET WITH LE DUC THO AND HA VAN LAU FOR THREE HOURS AND FIFTY MINUTES THIS MORNING AT OUR PLACE IN SCEAUX. HADJIB, NEGROPONTE AND ENGEL WERE PRESENT ON OUR SIDE. THO AND LAU WERE ACCOMPANIED BY NGUYEN MINH VY, PHAN HIEN, AND AN INTERPRETER AND TWO NOTETAKERS.
2. AFTER THANKING THO AND LAU FOR COMING AND RESPONDING TO OUR REQUEST FOR A MEETING PROMPTLY, I OPENED WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:
3. "WE HAVE SOUGHT THIS MEETING TODAY TO EXPLORE WITH YOU HOW WE CAN BEST MOVE OUR DISCUSSIONS AHEAD.
4. "I BELIEVE THAT THE POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES ON THE MAJOR QUESTIONS INVOLVED IN A SETTLEMENT IS QUITE CLEAR TO YOUR SIDE. I DO NOT INTEND TODAY TO REPEAT OUR POSITIONS. THEY ARE SET OUT IN PRESIDENT NIXON'S ADDRESS OF MAY 14 AND IN ANY STATEMENTS AT RECENT PLENARY SESSIONS OF THE PARIS MEETINGS.
5. "AS EMERGES FROM OUR PROPOSALS, FROM THE SIX-POINT PROPOSAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM AND FROM YOUR SIDE'S PRESENTATION OF YOUR TEN POINTS, WE FACE TWO BASIC ISSUES. ONE IS THE QUESTION OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF NON-SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES FROM SOUTH VIETNAM. THE OTHER IS THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

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6. "IN ADDITION TO THESE TWO QUESTIONS, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER IMPORTANT RELATED ISSUES WHICH ALSO EMERGE FROM THE PROPOSALS FOR PEACE MADE BY PRESIDENT NIXON, FROM THE SIX-POINT PROPOSALS OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, AND FROM YOUR SIDE'S TEN-POINT PROPOSALS. THESE PROBLEMS, WHICH ALSO NEED TO BE DISCUSSED AND SOLVED AS PART OF AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- A) DMZ;
- B) PRISONERS OF WAR;
- C) RESPECT FOR ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE GENEVA ACCORDS OF 1954 AND 1962;
- D) REUNIFICATION
- E) INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION AND VERIFICATION (IN CONNECTION WITH FORCE WITHDRAWAL, ELECTIONS, CEASE-FIRE AND OTHER AGREED PURPOSES); AND
- F) ISSUES IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE WAR--GUARANTEES FOREIGN BASES, FOREIGN MILITARY PRESENCE, ALLIANCES, NEUTRALITY, RELATIONS BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM, REGIONAL COOPERATION.

7. "NOW THAT BOTH SIDES HAVE PRESENTED SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT, WE SHOULD BE ABLE AT LEAST TO IDENTIFY THE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONS INVOLVED AND AGREE ON A BUSINESSLIKE WAY OF DISCUSSING THEM. I HAVE JUST TRIED TO SUGGEST LOGICAL ARRANGEMENT OF QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION. YOU MAY HAVE OTHER SUGGESTIONS. IN ANY CASE, IT SHOULD BE QUITE CLEAR THAT, HOWEVER WE DECIDE TO PROCEED, EITHER SIDE WOULD BE ABLE TO RAISE ANY SUBJECT IT WISHES.

8. " THAT BRINGS ME TO THE SECOND ASPECT OF WHAT I WANT TO SAY HERE TODAY. IN ADDITION TO IDENTIFYING THE QUESTIONS BEFORE US, US, WE ALSO SHOULD DECIDE WHAT IS THE MOST ORDERLY AND EXPEDITIOUS WAY TO DISCUSS THEM. WE HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON EACH OTHER'S PROPOSALS AT THE LAST TWO PLENARY SESSIONS OF THE PARIS MEETINGS. WE BELIEVE THAT THESE DISCUSSIONS ARE USEFUL AND SHOULD BE CONTINUED.

9. "BUT WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT SERIOUS DISCUSSION AND FRANK EXCHANGES OF VIEW REQUIRE PRIVATE MEETINGS. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF WAYS IN WHICH PRIVATE MEETINGS CAN BE ORGANIZED; AND WE ARE FLEXIBLE AS TO HOW THIS IS DONE. LOOKING AT THE QUESTIONS WHICH MUST BE DEALT WITH, IT SEEMS TO US THAT CERTAIN QUESTIONS CAN BE DISCUSSED PRINCIPALLY ON A BILATERAL BASIS. OTHERS MAY BE PROPER SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION IN A WIDER FORUM.

10. "THUS, THE SUBJECT OF WITHDRAWAL OF NON-SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES CONCERNS THE UNITED STATES AND THE DRV MOST DIRECTLY AND SHOULD BE DISCUSSED BETWEEN US. THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IS A MATTER FOR THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE THEMSELVES TO DETERMINE AND SHOULD BE DEALT WITH PRIMARILY BY THE GVN AND THE NLF.

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Per [signature]

11. "WE PROPOSE THAT THE PARTIES CONCERNED BEGIN PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS OF THESE TWO QUESTIONS IMMEDIATELY. DISCUSSION OF WITHDRAWALS AND OF POLITICAL SETTLEMENT CAN TAKE PLACE AT THE SAME TIME.

12. " WE SHOULD NOT CONFINE OURSELVES TO DISCUSSION OF THESE TWO ISSUES ALONE, HOWEVER. WHILE THOSE DISCUSSIONS ARE PROCEEDING, WE COULD ALSO BE DISCUSSING THE OTHER QUESTIONS AND ISSUES IN WHATEVER FORUM WE AGREE IS MOST APPROPRIATE. WE SHOULD FEEL FREE TO PASS FROM ONE ITEM TO ANOTHER AS THE SITUATION SEEMS TO REQUIRE, IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT NONE OF THE ISSUES IS EXCLUDED FROM DISCUSSION.

13. "THESE ARE OUR PRELIMINARY THOUGHT ON THE BEST WAY TO ORGANIZE OUR WORK SO THAT PROGRESS CAN BE MADE IN THE

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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4238

INFO RUEHCR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE 3892

STATE GRNC

BT

SECRET SECTION 2 OF 11 PARIS 8112

MODIS/PARIS MEETINGS/PLUS

DELTO 1793

CONTROL: 7529Q

RECD: May 31, 1969

6:16P.M.

SUBJECT: REPORT OF MEETING WITH LE DUC THO AND HA VAN LAU
SAIGON DELIVER AT OPENING OF BUSINESS

NEGOTIATIONS. WE HAVE CONSULTED WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, AND THAT GOVERNMENT IS AGREEABLE TO PROCEEDING IN THE WAY I HAVE JUST DESCRIBED. OUR THINKING ON THIS SUBJECT IS FLEXIBLE AND WE WOULD WELCOME SUGGESTIONS FROM YOUR SIDE. WE SEEK SIMPLY TO FIND THE BEST WAY TO GET DOWN TO THE BUSINESS OF DISCUSSING THE KEY ISSUES IN DETAIL". END STATEMENT

14. LAU RESPONDED THAT HE AND THO HAD MET US TODAY AT OUR REQUEST IN ORDER TO LISTEN TO A FURTHER PRESENTATION OF THE VIEWS OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. IT HAD BEEN AGREED BETWEEN US AT OUR PRIVATE MEETING OF MAY 7TH THAT WHEN EITHER SIDE HAD ANYTHING TO SAY WE WOULD MEET AGAIN. IF THE U.S. NOW HAD ANYTHING NEW TO SAY, THE DRV WAS PREPARED TO LISTEN.

15. LAU SAID THAT AS FOR THE POSITION OF THE USG CONCERNING THE TWO FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS, I HAD ALREADY PRESENTED THE U.S. POSITION AT THE PLENARY SESSIONS, AND THE DRV DELEGATION HAD ALREADY REPLIED. LAU SAID THAT TODAY I HAD NOT BROUGHT UP ANYTHING NEW OR DIFFERENT FROM MY STATEMENTS IN THE PLENARY SESSIONS. I HAD MENTIONED ONLY THE ORDER OF PROBLEMS TO BE DISCUSSED AND A WAY OF DISCUSSING THEM. LAU SAID HE THOUGHT THAT IF DISCUSSION WAS TO BE USEFUL, AND IF THE CONFERENCE WAS TO MAKE PROGRESS, THE US SHOULD EXPOUND ITS POINT OF VIEW ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THOSE QUESTIONS. TO HIS REGRET, I HAD SAID NOTHING NEW THIS MORNING.

16. LAU THEN GAVE THE FLOOR TO THO, WHO READ FROM A LONG, HAND-WRITTEN STATEMENT, OCCASIONALLY PAUSING TO ENLARGE UPON CERTAIN POINTS. THO SPOKE AS FOLLOWS: BEGIN STATEMENT

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17. PREVIOUSLY, HE AND XUAN THUY HAD MET MANY TIMES WITH HARRIMAN, AND HE WAS SURE THAT I HAD READ THE MINUTES OF THOSE MEETINGS. TODAY, HOWEVER, WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT HE HAD HAD DIRECT TALKS WITH ME (SIC). THO SAID HE WANTED TO PRESENT AN OUTLINE OF THE GENERAL SITUATION SO I WOULD HAVE AN AMPLER VIEW AND ALSO TO EXPRESS HIS VIEWS ON PRESIDENT NIXON'S EIGHT-POINTS AND THE NLF'S TEN-POINTS. FINALLY, HE HAD SOME PROPOSALS TO MAKE.

18. REVIEWING THE SITUATION, THO SAID THAT AFTER WORLD WAR 2 ALL THE OTHER SUPER-POWERS SUFFERED DEFEAT OR DEPRESSED ECONOMIES. THE US WAS AN IMPERIAL POWER WHICH WAS VICTORIOUS IN THE WAR AND BECAME THE MIGHTIEST POWER IN THE IMPERIALIST CAMP. IN ITS SCHEME TO CONTROL THE WHOLE WORLD, THE US SOUGHT BY ALL MEANS, ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, AND MILITARY, TO EXPAND ITS INFLUENCE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD SO AS TO SEIZE NEW MARKETS AND IMPLEMENT ITS NEO-COLONIALIST POLICY. AT THE SAME TIME, THE US WISHED TO COPE WITH THE SOCIALIST CAMP WHICH HAD TAKEN SHAPE AFTER THE WAR AND WAS DEVELOPING MORE STRONGLY THAN EVER, AND THE US ALSO WISHED TO REPRESS LIBERATION MOVEMENTS IN ASIA, LATIN AMERICA, AND AFRICA.

19. BUT, THO CONTINUED, THE US MET WITH THE OPPOSITION OF THE SOCIALIST CAMP AND THE OPPRESSED PEOPLES OF THE WORLD WHICH WERE RISING UP AND FOR THIS REASON THE US SUFFERED AN EVEN GREATER DEFEAT THAN THE OTHER IMPERIALIST POWERS SINCE WORLD WAR 2. THE US HAD MET WITH DEFEAT IN CHINA, KOREA, CUBA, AND VIET-NAM DURING THE FIRST WAR OF RESISTANCE AGAINST THE FRENCH. IN THIS FIRST WAR OF RESISTANCE AGAINST THE FRENCH, THE US PAID FOR HALF THE COST OF CONDUCTING THE WAR. THEN THERE WAS LAOS AND THE CURRENT WAR.

20. THE US WAS MEETING ITS GREATEST FAILURE DURING THE CURRENT WAR IN VIETNAM. IF WE WERE TO COMPARE THE POPULATION AND AREA OF VIET-NAM WITH THOSE ELEMENTS IN OTHER WARS IN WHICH THE US HAS PARTICIPATED, THE VIETNAMESE WAR HAS BEEN THE LONGEST AND COSTLIEST FOR THE US AND THE ONE IN WHICH THE US HAS MET ITS BIGGEST DEFEAT. THE US HAD 200 MILLION PEOPLE, IT WAS THE MIGHTIEST COUNTRY IN THE IMPERIALIST CAMP AND THE RICHEST. IT SENT ITS TROOPS TO CARRY OUT AGGRESSION AGAINST A COUNTRY WITH ONLY 30 MILLION PEOPLE AND A POOR ECONOMY. BUT THE US HAS HAD TO MOBILIZE OVER 600,000 TROOPS INCLUDING THOSE OF ITS ALLIES, AND TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PLANES, AND MODERN WEAPONS, INCLUDING TOXIC CHEMICALS--EVERYTHING EXCEPT FOR ATOMIC BOMBS. THE US HAD POURED OVER

3 MILLION TONS OF BOMBS ON THE POPULATION OF THE TWO ZONES, A BIGGER QUANTITY THAN THEY USED IN ALL OF WORLD WAR 2. ON A PER CAPITA BASIS, EACH VIETNAMESE HAD RECEIVED HUNDREDS OF KILOGRAMS OF BOMBS, AND COUNTING BY SQUARE KILOMETERS, EACH SQUARE KILOMETER HAD RECEIVED AT LEAST TEN TONS OF BOMBS.

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3- SECTION 2 OF 11 PARIS 8112 NODIS/PARIS MEETINGS/PLUS DELTO 1793

1. BUT WHAT HAD BEEN THE RESULTS? THO SAID THAT OVER THE
LAST FOUR YEARS, THE U.S. HAD SPENT 125 BILLION DOLLARS,
NOT COUNTING EXPENDITURES IN PREVIOUS YEARS AND NOT COUNTING
3 FORCES AND BASES OUTSIDE VIET-VAM BUT SERVING THE WAR IN
VIETNAM. THE US HAD SUFFERED OVER 270,000 CASUALTIES, OR
APPROXIMATELY HALF THE NUMBER OF TROOPS IN VIETNAM.
IT EVEN THIS FIGURE WAS FAR FROM ACCURATE.

2. BUT THE DRV WONDERED WHETHER THE US HAD GOTTEN ANYTHING
OUT OF THIS. IN FACT THE US HAD GOTTEN NOTHING OUT OF IT
EXCEPT SUFFERING AND MOURNING FOR THE US PEOPLE. THE US
COULD NOT BEAT THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE. THO SAID THAT THE
REPUBLICAN PLATFORM DURING THE NIXON CAMPAIGN ADMITTED THAT
THE US HAD MET WITH POLITICAL, MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC FAILURE.
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INFO RUEHC/AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE 3893

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SECRET SECTION 3 OF 11 PARIS 8112

NODIS/PARIS MEETINGS/PLUS

DELTO 1793

CONTROL: 7532Q

RECD: May 31, 1969

5:10 P.M.

THE VIET-NAM WAR HAD CREATED DIFFICULTIES FOR THE US IN THE ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL FIELDS WHICH THE US HAD NOT MET SINCE WORLD WAR II. NIXON HIMSELF HAD ADMITTED THAT THE US HAD BEEN SEVERELY STRAINED ON ACCOUNT OF THE VIET-NAM WAR, NOT ONLY IN THE MILITARY AND ECONOMIC FIELDS BUT ALSO IN THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL FIELDS.

23. THO SAID THAT THE DISSENSION IN THE POLITICAL LIFE OF THE US WOULD NEED SEVERAL YEARS TO BE HEALED. THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, INCLUDING POLITICIANS, CLERICS, INTELLECTUALS AND OTHERS WERE FED UP AND DEMANDED A PROMPT END TO THIS IMMORAL WAR AND THE PROMPT RETURN OF THEIR SONS AND BROTHERS.

24. THE VIET-NAM WAR HAD ALSO DIMINISHED THE US INTERNATIONAL ROLE AND THROWN THE US INTO UNPRECEDENTED ISOLATION. ALL PEACE LOVING PEOPLE IN THE WORLD, INCLUDING THOSE IN THE US, OPPOSED THIS WAR AND SUPPORTED THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S JUST CAUSE. BUT SO FAR, PRESIDENT NIXON AND THE US ADMINISTRATION HAD NOT DRAWN LESSONS FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF THE PAST 20 YEARS, PARTICULARLY THE LESSONS FROM THE FAILURES IN VIET-NAM. US AGGRESSION AGAINST VIET-NAM HAD LASTED 15 YEARS. THE US HAD WRONGLY EVALUATED THE SITUATION IN VIET-NAM AND HAD NOT UNDERSTOOD THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE. THE US HAD BEEN SUBJECTIVE AND CONTINUOUSLY COMMITTED ERRORS. AFTER NINE YEARS OF RESISTANCE AGAINST THE FRENCH, THO CONTINUED, PEACE WAS SUCCESSFULLY RESTORED IN VIET-NAM. AT THAT TIME, THE US THOUGHT THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE WERE EXHAUSTED BY THE WAR AGAINST THE FRENCH. VIETNAMESE TROOPS REGROUPED FROM THE SOUTH TO THE NORTH, AND THE US THOUGHT THAT THE VIETNAMESE FORCES IN SOUTH VIET-NAM WERE NEGLIGIBLE. THEN THE US SETUP THE DIEM DICTATORIAL AND FASCIST ADMINISTRATION TO MASSACRE THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE. THIS PERIOD CAN BE SAID TO HAVE BEEN THE MOST FRIGHTFUL PERIOD FOR THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE. BUT THE US DID NOT EXPECT THE PEOPLE IN SOUTH

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VIET-NAM TO CARRY OUT THEIR SIMULTANEOUS UPRISING AND TO SHATTER THE GRIP OF THE DIEM FASCIST ADMINISTRATION. THEN THE PEOPLE IN SOUTH VIET-NAM, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MLF, CARRIED OUT RESISTANCE AGAINST THE US SPECIAL WAR. THE BATTLES AT AP BAC AND BINH GIA MARKED THE DEFEAT OF THE US SPECIAL WAR. THIS WAS THE FIRST ERROR OF THE US. THE US HAD WRONGLY ASSESSED THE SITUATION AND THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE.

25. THEN, THEO CONTINUED, THE US COMMITTED ITS SECOND ERROR BY BRINGING HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF US TROOPS AND HUGE QUANTITIES OF SHELLS, BOMBS AND OTHER WEAPONS TO CARRY ON A LIMITED WAR IN THE HOPE OF CRUSHING THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIET-NAM. THE US CARRIED OUT TWO DRY SEASON COUNTER-OFFENSIVES IN 1965-66 AND 1966-67, WHICH THE US CALLED STRATEGIC COUNTER-OFFENSIVES AND SEARCH AND DESTROY, BUT THESE FAILED. THIS HAD BEEN OUR SECOND MISJUDGEMENT. AT THAT TIME GENERAL WESTMORELAND WAS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF IN VIET-NAM. HE REPORTED TO THE US GOVERNMENT THAT THE SITUATION WAS MOST OPTIMISTIC. BUT AT TET 1968 THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE CARRIED OUT A GENERAL OFFENSIVE AND UPRISING AND WON GREAT VICTORIES. THIS WAS THE THIRD ERROR IN EVALUATION. FINALLY WESTMORELAND WAS CALLED BACK TO THE US.

26. FOLLOWING TET 1968, THO SAID, THE US HAD TO CHANGE ITS STRATEGY AND ADOPT A DEFENSIVE POSITION, REPLACING SEARCH AND DESTROY OPERATIONS WITH CLEAR AND HOLD OPERATIONS. AFTER THE TET OFFENSIVE, THE US ONCE AGAIN MADE AN ERRONEOUS EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION. THE US THOUGHT THAT, AS A RESULT OF THE OFFENSIVE, THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE WERE EXHAUSTED AND NO LONGER IN A POSITION TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AND LAUNCH COUNTER-ATTACKS. THEREFORE, AFTER THE CESSATION OF BOMBING AGAINST THE DRV, THE US LAUNCHED VERY FIERCE SWEEP OPERATIONS IN SOUTH VIET-NAM AND THE NUMBER OF B52 BOMBINGS GREATLY INCREASED. BUT THE US DID NOT EXPECT THE LAUNCHING OF ANOTHER OFFENSIVE IN THE SPRING OF 1969. ONCE AGAIN WE HAD WRONGLY EVALUATED THE SITUATION AND THEREFORE WE HAD SUFFERED GREAT DEFEATS.

27. THO DAID THAT IF WE REVIEW THE PAST 15 YEARS, WE WOULD SEE THAT THE US HAD COMMITTED MANY ERRORS IN VIET-NAM. CONCERNING NORTH VIET-NAM, THE US HAD MOBILIZED A VERY POWERFUL AIR FORCE TO DESTROY THE PEOPLE OF NORTH VIET-NAM. FINALLY IT WAS THE US ITSELF WHICH WAS THE PARTY TO SUFFER DEFEAT, AND THE US HAD TO STOP THE BOMBING. IT WAS EVIDENT THAT IT WAS ONE MORE ERRONEOUS EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION AND ONE MORE ERROR ON THE PART OF THE US.

28. THO SAID THAT THE DRV WONDERED IF THE US HAD REALIZED ITS ERRORS BY NOW. HE THOUGHT THAT WE HAD PARTLY REALIZED THEM, BUT THE DRV STILL THOUGHT THE US HAD NOT WHOLLY REALIZED ITS ERRORS AND HAD NOT YET DRAWN COMPLETE LESSONS FROM THEM.

29. WHAT PROOF DID THE DRV HAVE THE US HAD NOT DRAWN LESSONS FROM PAST EXPERIENCE? AT PRESENT THE US WANTED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE VIETNAMESE WAR, BUT STILL REGRETTED IT AND WANTED TO DRAG ON THE WAR. THE DRV AND THE US HAD BEEN TALKING

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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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CONTROL: 7527Q
RECD: May 31, 1969
4:55PM

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4240
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SECRET SECTION 4 OF 11 PARIS 8112

NODIS/PARIS MEETINGS/PLUS

DELTO 1793

FOR OVER ONE YEAR. THE US TOOK FIVE MONTHS TO STOP THE BOMBING AND THREE MONTHS TO SETTLE PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS. FOUR MONTHS HAD ELAPSED SINCE PRESIDENT NIXON HAD COME TO POWER AND NO QUESTION HAD YET BEEN SETTLED. THE DRV WONDERED HOW LONG THIS WOULD DRAG ON. WHY WAS THIS THE SITUATION? THE REASON WAS THAT THE US, ALTHOUGH IT WISHED TO DISENGAGE FROM THE WAR, STILL WANTED TO SETTLE PROBLEMS FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH.

30. THIS WAS WHY THE US, ON THE ONE HAND, WISHED TO APPLY MAXIMUM PRESSURE ON THE BATTLEFIELD. THO SAID THAT HE WISHED TO CITE AN ARTICLE FROM THE NY TIMES OF MAY 29. HE SAID THAT HE WISHED TO BRING THE ARTICLE TO OUR ATTENTION, EVEN THOUGH WE KNOW THE FACTS AND THEY KNOW THEM BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE, BECAUSE HE WISHED TO SHOW US THE OPINION OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AS EXPRESSED BY THE PRESS. ACCORDING TO THE NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE, US MILITARY PRESSURE HAD GREATLY INCREASED SINCE NOVEMBER 1968. OPERATIONS BY US TROOPS HAD DOUBLED AND THE PUPPET TROOPS HAD INCREASED THEIR OPERATIONS MANY-FOLD. THUS, HOW COULD THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE REFRAIN FROM STRIKING BACK IN LEGITIMATE SELF-DEFENSE? THO SAID HE REMEMBERED THAT MANY US SENATORS, AND HARRIMAN AS WELL, HAD MADE STATEMENTS TO THE EFFECT THAT IN THE FACE OF SUCH AN OFFENSIVE BY US TROOPS, THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY BUT TO STRIKE BACK, AND THIS WAS LEGITIMATE.

31. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE US WAS SEEKING TO PROLONG THE NEGOTIATIONS ON SETTLING THE VIETNAM PROBLEM IN ORDER TO TRY TO BUY TIME TO STRENGTHEN AND CONSOLIDATE THE PUPPET ARMY AND ADMINISTRATION. THIS WAS THE "DE-AMERICANIZATION" OR "VIETNAMIZATION" OF THE WAR AND A CONTINUATION OF NEO-COLONIALISM.

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32. THO SAID HE WISHED TO SPEAK SIMPLY. UNABLE TO SEIZE VIETNAM BY MILITARY MEANS, THE US WISHED TO DISENGAGE; BUT THE US STILL WISHED TO HOLD ON TO VIETNAM BY ANOTHER METHOD. THIS POLICY WAS EVIDENCED CLEARLY BY PRESIDENT NIXON'S MAY 14 SPEECH. IN THE FIRST PLACE, NIXON SAID HE WAS MAINTAINING HIS SO-CALLED COMMITMENT TO VIETNAM BY SAYING THAT IF THE US ABANDONED SOUTH VIETNAM THERE WAS THE RISK OF MASSACRE. IF THE US ABANDONED THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM, IT WOULD RISK DANGER IN OTHER AREAS. A GREAT POWER COULD NOT RENEGE ON ITS PLEDGES. FROM THIS IT IS CLEAR THAT NIXON HAD NOT ABANDONED THE INTENT TO SEIZE SOUTH VIETNAM.

3. SECOND, NIXON SPOKE OF "DE-AMERICANIZATION" OR "VIETNAMIZATION" OF THE WAR BY CONSOLIDATING THE PUPPET ARMY AND ADMINISTRATION. NIXON HAD SAID THE US WOULD REINFORCE SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES AND EXPRESSED SATISFACTION AT THE GOOD PROGRESS IN THIS REGARD.

34. THIRD, THO CONTINUED, CONCERNING THE WITHDRAWAL OF US AND ALLIED TROOPS FROM SOUTH VIETNAM, MR NIXON PROPOSED THAT A NUMBER OF THOSE FORCES BE WITHDRAWN WITHIN 12 MONTHS. AS FOR THE REMAINING FORCES THERE WOULD BE NO TIME LIMIT. IN THE MEANTIME, THE WAR WOULD GO ON AND THE US WOULD STAND BESIDE THE PUPPET ARMY TO HELP THEM FIGHT AND CONTINUE THE WAR AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM. THE US WANTED THE WITHDRAWAL OF SO-CALLED NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES FROM SOUTH VIETNAM SO THAT THE FORCES OF THE NLF WOULD BE WEAKENED AND ANNIHILATED BY THE STRENGTHENED AND CONSOLIDATED PUPPET ARMY.

35. FOURTH, NIXON WAS STILL CLINGING TO THE THIEU-KY-HUONG ADMINISTRATION AND SAID NOTHING ABOUT A COALITION GOVERNMENT. HE MENTIONED FREE GENERAL ELECTIONS, BUT WHO WOULD ORGANIZE THOSE ELECTIONS? WOULD IT BE THE THIEU-KY-HUONG ADMINISTRATION, WHICH THE US CLAIMED TO BE CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGITIMATE? THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT WAS VAGUE ON THIS SUBJECT. IN FACT, THE US INTENTION WAS TO MAINTAIN THE THIEU-KY-HUONG ADMINISTRATION AND US THIS ADMINISTRATION FOR ORGANIZING GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PUPPET CONSTITUTION.

36. PERHAPS, THO SAID, THE US WOULD IN TIME BRING ABOUT SOME CHANGES IN THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE CONSTITUTION IN ORDER TO ALLOW THE NLF TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTIONS AS A MINOR GROUP OR PLAYING A SUBORDINATE ROLE IN ELECTIONS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PUPPET CONSTITUTION. HOW COULD THE NLF AND THE DRV ACCEPT THESE PROVISIONS?

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37. THO SAID THAT THE US EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION, THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE PUPPET ARMY AND ADMINISTRATION, AND THE US SCHEM TO VIETNAMEZE THE WAR IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT NEO-COLONIALISM IN VIETNAM, WERE UNREALISTIC SCHEMES SURE TO MEET WITH FAILURE. SHOULD WE CONTINUE TO APPLY THIS POLICY, THE DRV THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD MERELY BE ONE MORE US ERROR. THE DRV WOULD ALSO THINK THAT WE HAD NOT YET DRAWN SUFFICIENT LESSONS FROM OUR PAST ERRORS, FOR WHICH WE HAD PAID A HIGH PRICE.

38. IN 1954 THE US HAD SPENT MUCH MONEY TO RIG-UP THE DIEM REGIME, BUT FAILED. THEN THE US HAD TO CHANGE ITS SPECIAL WAR INTO A LOCAL WAR SO AS TO MAINTAIN THE PUPPET ADMINISTRATION THAT WE HAD SET UP. AFTER SO MANY CHANGES IN PUPPET ADMINISTRATIONS, THE US HAD REALIZED IT COULD NOT WIN.

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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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DE RUFNCR 8112 1512030
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FM ANEMBASSY PARIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4241
INFO RUEHCR/ANEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE 3895
STATE GRNC

CONTROL: 7535Q
RECD: May 31, 1969
5:35P.M.

BT
S E C R E T SECTION 5 OF 11 PARIS 8112

MODIS/PARIS MEETINGS/PLUS

DELTO 1793

39. THO SAID THAT NOW, HOWEVER, THE US WANTED TO WITHDRAW BUT STILL WANTED TO USE THE PUPPET ARMY AND ADMINISTRATION TO CARRY OUT US NEO-COLONIALISM. HOW COULD THIS SUCCEED? IT DID NOT SUCCEED IN THE PAST, AND NOW IT CERTAINLY COULD NOT. THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM NOW IS MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THAT IN 1954. THE NLF HAD BECOME A MILITARY AND POLITICAL FORCE WHICH CANNOT BE VANQUISHED. THE THIEU-KY-HUONG ADMINISTRATION WAS A MILITARY DICTATORSHIP AND WAS WAR-LIKE AND IT WAS UNPOPULAR. THIS WAS NOT ONLY THE DRV'S JUDGMENT, BUT THAT OF MANY PEOPLE IN THE US AS WELL. THE US COULD NOT SUCCEED IN STRENGTHENING SUCH AN ADMINISTRATION NO MATTER HOW MUCH MONEY, BOMBS, AND SHELLS WERE BROUGHT IN. IT WAS JUST LIKE A GRIEVOUSLY SICK MAN. NO MATTER HOW MUCH MEDICAL AID HE RECEIVED, HE COULD NOT BE WELL AGAIN. THE MEN IN THE THIEU-KY-HUONG ADMINISTRATION RELIED ON THE US TROOPS, DOLLARS, AND WEAPONS. WITHOUT SUCH SUPPORT THEY COULD NOT SURVIVE. THO SAID HE THOUGHT THAT WE COULD NOT SUCCEED IF WE RELIED ON THE THIEU-KY-HUONG ADMINISTRATION TO VIETNAMIZE THE WAR AND CARRY OUT NEO-COLONIALISM. NO MATTER HOW LONG THE US PROLONGED ITS STAY IN VIETNAM IN ORDER TO CONSOLIDATE THE PUPPET ARMY AND ADMINISTRATION, IT COULD NOT SUCCEED IN CONSOLIDATING THEM. FURTHERMORE, IF THE US PROLONGED ITS STAY IN VIETNAM, THE WAR WOULD GO ON, AND THE US WOULD MEET STILL MORE DEFEATS. THIS WAS THE EMBARRASSMENT FOR THE US. THO SAID HE THOUGHT THAT IF WE WERE WISE ENOUGH, WE WOULD DRAW LESSONS FROM PAST EXPERIENCES.

46. THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE, THO SAID, WERE OPPRESSED PEOPLE AND THEY KNEW COLONIALISM QUITE WELL. THEY UNDERSTOOD COLONIAL SCHEMES AND MANEUVERS. THEY HAD SIGNED AGREEMENTS WITH THE FRENCH IN MARCH 1946 AND THE GENEVA ACCORDS OF 1954 AND THOSE OF 1962, AND THEREFORE

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THEY HAD HAD EXPERIENCE AND UNDERSTOOD THE SCHEMES AND MANEUVERS OF THE COLONIALISTS. NO MANEUVER COULD DECEIVE THEM.

41. THE NLF, WHO CONTINUED, HAD PUT FORWARD ITS OWN SOLUTION TO THE SOUTH VIETNAM PROBLEM, WHICH HAS WON THE WIDESPREAD APPROVAL AND SUPPORT OF ALL PEACE AND JUSTICE LOVING PEOPLES OF THE WORLD, INCLUDING THOSE IN THE UNITED STATES. THESE PROPOSALS WERE LOGICAL AND REASONABLE AND IN KEEPING WITH THE REALITIES IN SOUTH VIETNAM. THEY WERE EVIDENCE OF GOOD WILL AND SERIOUS INTENT OF THE NLF TO SEEK A SOLUTION TO THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PROBLEM. EVEN THE US HAD JUDGED IT AS SERIOUS AND WELCOMED IT IN SPITE OF POINTS IN THE SOLUTION WITH WHICH THE US DID NOT AGREE.

42. WHO SAID THESE PROPOSALS STARTED FROM THE PRINCIPLE OF RESPECT OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S FUNDAMENTAL NATIONAL RIGHTS. THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE WERE DEFINITELY NOT THE AGGRESSORS, NOR WOULD THE PEOPLE OF NORTH VIETNAM EVER BE SENT TO CARRY OUT AGGRESSION AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM. THE US WAS THE AGGRESSOR, AND THEREFORE THEY DEMANDED THAT US AND ALLIED TROOPS BE WITHDRAWN FROM SOUTH VIETNAM WITHOUT POSING ANY CONDITIONS. THIS WAS A LOGICAL DEMAND WHICH HAD ITS OWN REASON.

43. THEY HAD SAID, WHO CONTINUED, THAT THE PROBLEM OF VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES IN SOUTH VIETNAM WOULD BE SETTLED AMONG THE VIETNAMESE PARTIES IN A LOGICAL AND REASONABLE WAY AND THEY WOULD CREATE CONDITIONS IN WHICH THE US COULD WITHDRAW HONORABLY.

44. WHO SAID THAT IN THE POLITICAL FIELD, THE NLF WAS THE AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE. THERE WAS ALSO THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION, ALTHOUGH IT REPRESENTED NO ONE. THEN THERE WERE OTHER PARTIES, RELIGIONS, AND ELEMENTS OF VARIOUS TENDENCIES. DURING THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE RESTORATION OF PEACE AND THE ORGANIZATION OF GENERAL ELECTIONS, WHO WILL ORGANIZE THEM IN A FAIR AND DEMOCRATIC WAY AND CARRY OUT THE CONCLUDED AGREEMENTS? WITHOUT A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT, WHO WILL COME FORWARD TO CARRY OUT THESE MEASURES?

45. WHO SAID HE WISHED TO REITERATE THAT WITHOUT A PROVISIONAL COALITION GOVERNMENT, NO ONE COULD. THE DRV AND NLF DEFINITELY WOULD NOT LET THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION ORGANIZE GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THEIR CONSTITUTION. BUT AT THE SAME TIME THE NLF WOULD NOT COMPEL THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION TO ABIDE BY THE LAWS OF THE NLF. THIS WAS EXPRESSED IN POINT 5 OF THE NLF PROGRAM: "IN THE PERIOD FROM THE RESTORATION OF PEACE TO THE HOLDING OF GENERAL ELECTIONS, NO PARTY WILL IMPOSE ITS POLITICAL REGIME ON THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM."

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4G. THEREFORE, THE BEST WAY WAS TO FORM A PROVISIONAL COALITION GOVERNMENT THROUGH DEMOCRATIC DISCUSSION AND AGREEMENT AMONG ALL PARTIES. THEN THIS PROVISIONAL COALITION GOVERNMENT WOULD ORGANIZE GENERAL ELECTIONS, IN KEEPING WITH THE NLF'S POINT 5. THESE WERE FAIR, LOGICAL, AND REASONABLE PROPOSALS. THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY.

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TELEGRAM

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CONTROL: 7533Q

RECD: May 31, 1969
5:23 P.M.

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DE RUFNCR 8112/6 1512055
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4242
INFO RUEHCR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE 3896
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SUBJECT: REPORT OF MEETING WITH LE DUC THO AND HA VAN LAU
SAIGON DELIVER AT OPENING OF BUSINESS

47. THO SAID HE HAD JUST TALKED ABOUT THE TWO FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS IN THE FRONT'S TEN-POINT OVERALL SOLUTION. IF THESE TWO FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS WERE SETTLED, THEN OTHER PROBLEMS ARISING BETWEEN US WOULD BE EASILY SETTLED. (IN REPLY TO MY QUESTION, THO CLARIFIED THAT HE WAS REFERRING TO THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS OF TROOP WITHDRAWAL AND POLITICAL SETTLEMENT).

48. AS FOR OTHER QUESTIONS, THO CONTINUED, THE DRV POSITION ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THE DRV AND U.S. HAD BEEN CLEARLY EXPOUNDED. AFTER THE RESTORATION OF PEACE, RELATIONS COULD BE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE US AND NORTH VIET-NAM IN ALL FIELDS, ON THE BASIS OF EQUALITY, MUTUAL INTEREST, AND NON-INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. THO THOUGHT THAT THIS WOULD BE MORE ADVANTAGEOUS TO US, WHILE IF WE JUST CONTINUED THE WAR, THEN WE WOULD SPEND MORE MONEY AND CAUSE MORE MOURNING TO THE U.S. PEOPLE WITHOUT ANY INTEREST AT ALL.

49. THO SAID THE VIETNAMESE WERE EXPERIENCED IN DEALING WITH THE FRENCH, WHO HAD DOMINATED THE VIETNAMESE FOR OVER 100 YEARS. THE VIETNAMESE HAD FOUGHT THE FRENCH VERY FIERCELY BUT WHEN PROBLEMS BETWEEN THEM AND THE FRENCH HAD BEEN SETTLED, THEN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THEIR COUNTRY AND FRANCE BECAME RELATIONS OF FRIENDSHIP AND THESE RELATIONS WERE DEVELOPING, DAY BY DAY, AS WE COULD SEE.

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50. AS FOR LAOS AND CAMBODIA, THO SAID THE DRV'S POLICY WAS CLEAR. THE DRV HAD ALWAYS RESPECTED THE GENEVA AGREEMENTS OF 1962 ON LAOS. THE DRV HAD ALWAYS RESPECTED THE INDEPENDENCE, SOVEREIGNTY, NEUTRALITY, AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF CAMBODIA WITHIN ITS PRESENT BOUNDARIES. THEY WANTED SOUTH VIETNAM, ALONG WITH CAMBODIA AND LAOS, TO BE IN A NEUTRAL AREA. SOUTH VIETNAM WOULD NOT ACCEPT FOREIGN TROOPS, BASES, MILITARY ALLIANCES OR MILITARY PROTECTION FROM ANY COUNTRY. THE SAME WAS TRUE OF THE DRV, AS STATED IN ITS FOUR POINTS. THE DRV DID NOT ACCEPT FOREIGN TROOPS OR BASES, IT HAS NOT ENTERED INTO ANY MILITARY ALLIANCES AND HAD NOT ACCEPTED THE PROTECTION OF ANY FOREIGN POWER.

51. THO SAID THAT THE DRV CONSIDERED THE 10 POINTS OF THE NLF TO BE LOGICAL, REASONABLE, AND SERIOUS, EVIDENCE OF GOOD WILL AND IN KEEPING WITH REALITIES.

52. THE U.S. OFTEN SAID, THO CONTINUED, THAT IT WAS REALISTIC. THEREFORE, THE U.S. SHOULD ADOPT A SERIOUS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE NLF'S TEN-POINT PROPOSAL. THE US OFTEN SAID IT WISHED AN HONORABLE WITHDRAWAL. THE DRV NEVER INTENDED TO HUMILIATE US OR COMPEL US TO SURRENDER. THE DRV WANTED US TO WITHDRAW IN AN HONORABLE WAY BUT THO THOUGHT THE GREATEST HONOR FOR THE U.S. WOULD BE TO WITHDRAW FROM SOUTH VIETNAM BECAUSE THE LONGER WE STAYED IN SOUTH VIETNAM, THE MORE REDUCED OUR PRESTIGE WOULD BE AND THE GREATER THE DISSATISFACTION OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. MR. NIXON HIMSELF HAD ADMITTED THAT WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE A POPULAR ACTION BUT TO THE DRV'S REGRET, MR. NIXON HAS NOT YET CARRIED THIS OUT.

53. THE FRENCH HAD WITHDRAWN FROM VIETNAM. THEY HAD NOT LOST PRESTIGE, BUT TO THE CONTRARY, BECAME STRONGER. THIS WAS AN EXPERIENCE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT IF WE NOW WISHED A PROMPT AND PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE VIETNAM PROBLEM. BUT IF THE U.S. RESORTED TO MAXIMUM MILITARY PRESSURE TO DRAG ON THE WAR, THEY HAD NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE BUT TO STRIKE BACK. THIS INVOLVED THE LEGITIMATE RIGHT OF SELF-DEFENSE OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE.

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54. THO SAID THAT IF THE WAR WERE TO CONTINUE, THEN THERE WERE THE FOLLOWING POSSIBILITIES:
THE WAR WILL DRAG ON IN SOUTH VIETNAM OR IT WILL BE EXPANDED TO NORTH VIETNAM ON THE GROUND AND IN THE AIR. BUT THE DRV BELIEVES THAT THE UNITED STATES CANNOT WIN A VICTORY BECAUSE IT HAS WAGED WAR IN SOUTH VIETNAM FOR TEN YEARS AND, NO MATTER HOW LONG IT DRAGS ON, THE UNITED STATES CANNOT SUCCEED. IN THE DRV'S VIEW, IF THE UNITED STATES DRAGS ON THE WAR THEN ITS DEFEAT WILL BE EVEN GREATER. THE UNITED STATES CANNOT CHANGE THE CURRENT SITUATION IN VIETNAM WHATEVER MEANS THEY USE, THO SAID. THEY WOULD CONTINUE TO FIGHT AS LONG AS THE UNITED STATES PROLONGS THE WAR.
55. THO SAID THAT THEY HAD EXPERIENCE IN PROTRACTED WAR AGAINST THE UNITED STATES AND AGAINST THE FRENCH IN PREVIOUS YEARS. THEY WERE RESOLUTE TO WIN INDEPENDENCE AND FREEDOM NO MATTER HOW LONG THEY HAD TO FIGHT AND NO MATTER WHAT SACRIFICES WERE NECESSARY SINCE THERE WAS NOTHING MORE PRECIOUS THAN INDEPENDENCE AND FREEDOM. THEIR DETERMINATION TO WIN INDEPENDENCE IS NOT RECENT. IT EXISTED FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS OF HISTORY. BY PROLONGING THE WAR MORE UNITED STATES LIVES AND RESOURCES WERE BEING LOST AND THE UNITED STATES GAINED NOTHING AS A RESULT.

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4243
INFO RUEHCR/AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE 3897
STATE GRNC

CONTROL: 7537Q
RECD: May 31, 1969
5:53 P.M.

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56. THO SAID THAT IF THE UNITED STATES WERE TO EXPAND THE WAR TO NORTH VIET-NAM THAT FIRST OF ALL THIS WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES AND OF THE WORLD. EVEN THE ALLIES OF THE UNITED STATES DO NOT WANT AN EXPANSION OF THE WAR. SO HOW COULD THE UNITED STATES EXPAND THE WAR TO NORTH VIET-NAM? HOWEVER, IF IN SPITE OF THIS OPPOSITION THE UNITED STATES EXPANDED THE WAR, IT COULD NOT WIN THE WAR ON THE GROUND IN NORTH VIET-NAM SINCE IT HAD NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN THE AIR WAR OF DESTRUCTION AGAINST NORTH VIET-NAM. HOW COULD THE UNITED STATES BE SUCCESSFUL IN EXPANDING THE WAR TO NORTH VIET-NAM IF IT HAD NOT SUCCEEDED IN FIGHTING 14 MILLION PEOPLE IN THE SOUTH? MOREOVER, IN SUCH CONDITIONS THE WAR WOULD NOT BE LIMITED TO VIET-NAM. THE UNITED STATES WOULD HAVE TO FACE WAR IN THE WHOLE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND ITS DIFFICULTIES AND DEFEAT WOULD BE GREATER.

57. THE VIETNAMESE ARE OPPRESSED PEOPLE, THO SAID, AND THEY HAVE NOT COMMITTED AGGRESSION AGAINST ANYONE. BUT, BEING OPPRESSED, THEY HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO FIGHT AGAINST ANY EVENTUALITY AND RESIST AGGRESSION. ONE THING THEY ARE CONVINCED OF -- THAT IS THAT THE PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES DO NOT WANT TO PROLONG OR EXPAND THE WAR. THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE ARE THE SAME. THEY JUST WANT PEACE TO BUILD THEIR COUNTRY. A PEACE IN INDEPENDENCE AND FREEDOM.

58. WE HAVE BEEN AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE FOR MORE THAN ONE YEAR, THO CONTINUED. AMBASSADOR LODGE HAS NOT BEEN HERE SO LONG BUT, THO SAID, HE HAD MET WITH HARRIMAN MANY TIMES AND HARRIMAN HAD REALIZED THAT THE DRV HAD COME TO PARIS WITH GOODWILL AND SERIOUS INTENT. WHETHER THE PROBLEM WAS SETTLED OR NOT DEPENDED ON THE UNITED STATES. IN ORDER TO MAKE NEGOTIATIONS PROGRESS THE DRV, LIKE THE UNITED STATES, MUST ENTER INTO DISCUSSION OF ALL PROBLEMS. ONLY BY DOING THIS CAN WE HAVE A SETTLEMENT.

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59. THO SAID THAT HE THEREFORE PROPOSED THE FOLLOWING TWO THINGS: FIRSTLY, THE NLF HAS PUT FORWARD ITS TEN-POINT SOLUTION AND THE UNITED STATES HAS PUT FORWARD EIGHT POINTS. THE DRV FEELS THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO HOLD DISCUSSIONS TO COME TO AN AGREEMENT ON ALL PROBLEMS MENTIONED IN THE TEN POINTS OF THE NLF. AFTER AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN SIGNED ON ALL PROBLEMS MENTIONED IN THE TEN-POINT SOLUTION, THEN WE SHALL COME TO THE SIGNING OF AN AGREEMENT FOR A CEASE FIRE. ALL THE PARTIES CONCERNED WILL IMPLEMENT THE SIGNED AGREEMENTS. THO ASKED IF WE AGREED TO THE FOREGOING.

60. SECONDLY, THO SAID, AMONG THE PROBLEMS MENTIONED IN THE NLF'S TEN POINTS SOME INVOLVED FOUR PARTIES, SOME THREE PARTIES AND OTHERS TWO PARTIES. THE QUESTION, THEREFORE, ARISES AS TO HOW WE SHALL PROCEED TO SETTLE THESE PROBLEMS. AT PRESENT THE UNITED STATES IS NOT YET PREPARED TO TALK WITH THE NLF EVEN THOUGH IT IS FULLY RESPONSIBLE AND COMPETENT TO SETTLE MATTERS REGARDING SOUTH VIET-NAM. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE NLF IS NOT PREPARED TO TALK TO THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION. HOW, THEREFORE, SHALL WE CONDUCT THE CONFERENCE? THE DV FEELS THAT AMONG THE OBSTACLES TO PROGRESS IN THIS CONFERENCE THE GREATEST ONE IS THE THIEU/KY/HUONG ADMINISTRATION, THO SAID THAT I WAS FAMILIAR WITH THIS QUESTION AND HE WOULD NOT DWELL ON IT. THE INTERESTS OF THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION ARE CLOSELY LINKED WITH THE CONTINUATION OF THE WAR. THEY DO NOT WANT A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. THEY WANT THE WAR PROLONGED.

61. THIEU HAS JUST SAID IN SOUTH KOREA THAT HE WANTS TO PROLONG THE OCCUPATION OF SOUTH VIET-NAM BY US TROOPS AND HE OPPOSES A COALITION GOVERNMENT. WITH SUCH AN ADMINISTRATION HOW, THO ASKED, CAN WE PEACEFULLY SETTLE THE VIETNAMESE PROBLEM? HOW CAN WE TALK WITH AN ADMINISTRATION WHICH PERSECUTES ALL THOSE PEOPLE WHO MENTION PEACE, NEUTRALITY, AND TALKS WITH THE NLF?

62. THO SAID HE WISHED TO ASK ME IF WE WANTED TO PROLONG THE WAR OR SETTLE THE PROBLEM. IF WE WANTED TO SETTLE THE WAR THEN WE COULD NOT MAINTAIN THE THIEU/KY/HUONG ADMINISTRATION. WE SHOULD NOT MAINTAIN SUCH AN ADMINISTRATION OR ALLOW IT TO EXIST. THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIET-NAM WANT TO CHANGE THAT ADMINISTRATION BECAUSE THEY WANT A PEACE CABINET. THEY WANT SUCH A CABINET IN THE SENSE THAT THEY WANT A GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL CONDUCT SERIOUS TALKS WITH THE NLF AND WHICH WILL ABSTAIN FROM CRUELITIES AND OTHER DICTATORIAL METHODS. THEY WANT AN ADMINISTRATION WHICH WILL ASSURE AT LEAST THE MINIMUM DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES FOR THEIR CITIZENS. THE FRONT HAS CLEARLY STATED THAT IT WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN SUCH AN ADMINISTRATION BUT RATHER THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT SUCH AN ADMINISTRATION WILL TALK TO THE NLF.

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63. THO SAID THAT THE NLF AND THE DRV WANTED TO SEE SUCH AN ADMINISTRATION ESTABLISHED IN ORDER TO HAVE FAVORABLE CONDITIONS FOR NEGOTIATIONS. IF THERE IS AN ADMINISTRATION WHICH STANDS FOR PEACE AND SERIOUS TALKS TO SETTLE THE PROBLEM, AND WHICH INSURES THE MINIMUM DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES FOR THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIET-NAM, THEN THE DRV AND THE NLF WILL NATURALLY TAKE ACTIONS AND HAVE AN ATTITUDE APPROPRIATE TO SUCH AN ADMINISTRATION. IF ON THE OTHER HAND EPOTHER ADMINISTRATIONSAS SET UP WHICH CLAMORED ABOUT PEACE BUT CONTINUED TO APPLY DICTATORIAL AND BELLICOSE METHODS, THEN THIS WOULD ONLY BE A CHANGE IN PERSONNEL AND THE DRV AND NLF COULD NOT APPROVE SUCH AN ADMINISTRATION. THOS SAID THAT WE HAD SET UP THE SIAGON ADMINISTRATION AND WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR IT. IF IT HAS A DICTATORIAL AND BELLICAOSE CHARACTER THAT WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE UNITED STATES. THO ASKED IF WE FELT THAT WE WERE RESPONSIBLE TO THE UNITED STATES PEOPLE OR WERE WE RESPONSIBLE TO THOSE PEOPLE IN THE PRESENT SAIGON ADMINISTRATION. IF WE WANTED PEACE AND WANTED TO SETTLE THE PROBLEM AND HAD A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY TO THE UNITED STATES PEOPLE, THEN WE SHOULD NOT MAINTAIN THE PRESENT SAIGON ADMINISTRATION. IF WE DID, THEN THE CONFERENCE COULD NOT PROGRESS.

64. THE FOREGOING, THO SAID, WERE THE DRV'S TWO PROPOSALS.

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Date 10/1/88 BY SP-6



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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4244
INFO RUEHC/AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE 3898
STATE GRNC
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AND THEY WOULD LIKE TO KNOW OUR VIEWS. ONLY BY A SOLUTION OF THESE TWO PROBLEMS COULD WE INSURE PROGRESS IN THE CONFERENCE AND PROCEED TO THE DISCUSSION OF SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEMS. IN ORDER TO HAVE RESULTS. END STATEMENT

5. THO SAID THAT HE HAD SPOKEN AT GREAT LENGTH SINCE THIS WAS HIS FIRST MEETING WITH ME (NOTE: THIS IS INACCURATE SINCE THO AND I MET TOGETHER PRIVATELY ON MAY 7). I THEN PROPOSED A BRIEF RECESS.

6. ON RESUMING, I SAID THAT I WAS SURE THAT IT WOULD NOT COME AS A SURPRISE TO MR LE DUC THO THAT I DID NOT ACCEPT ALL THE CONTENTIONS HE HAD MADE. I COULD NOT ACCEPT HIS CHARACTERIZATION OF THE UNITED STATES AS AN IMPERIALIST POWER, NOR HIS CONTENTION THAT WE WERE SEEKING TO CONTROL THE WORLD, NOR THAT WE ARE AGGRESSORS AND NEO-COLONIALISTS. I SAID THAT I HAD MADE MY VIEWS CLEAR ON THESE SUBJECTS MANY TIMES IN THE PAST.

67. IN ANSWER TO WHAT HAD BEEN SAID BY AMBASSADOR LAU, I SAID HE WAS RIGHT IN SAYING THAT TODAY WE HAD PROPOSED NO NEW ITEMS OF SUBSTANCE. THIS WAS BECAUSE WE WANTED TO IDENTIFY THE ISSUES. WE HAD ALSO SHOWN THAT WE WERE NOT LIMITED TO BILATERAL CONVERSATIONS AND THAT WE ARE FLEXIBLE. WHEN WE FIND A WAY TO PROCEED, I WOULD SPEAK ABOUT SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS AND INTRODUCE NEW ITEMS OF SUBSTANCE.

68. I SAID THAT I AGREED WHOLEHEARTEDLY WITH MR LE DUC THO'S EXPRESSED WISH TO NEGOTIATE AN END TO THIS WAR. THAT WAS ONE THING WE COULD AGREE ON AND I DID HOPE IT WOULD BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN OUR DISAGREEMENTS ABOUT HISTORY.

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1. I THEN REFERRED TO THO'S REMARKS TO THE EFFECT THAT WE WERE "SET UP" AND WERE "MAINTAINING". THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION. SO HAPPENED THAT I WAS IN VIETNAM WHEN THE VIETNAMESE INSTITUTION HAD BEEN CREATED AND ADOPTED AND I COULD ASSURE THO THAT WE DID NOT "SET IT UP." I COULD ALSO ASSURE HIM THAT WE DO NOT GIVE THE GVN ORDERS.

2. I THEN SAID, THEIR SIDE HAD AGREED THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE PARIS MEETINGS. THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM HAD SENT A DELEGATION HERE AND HAS PARTICIPATED CONSTRUCTIVELY IN THE DISCUSSIONS AT THE MAJESTIC. PRESIDENT HIEU HAS OFFERED TO TALK WITH THE NLF, WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS, ABOUT AN INTERNAL POLITICAL SOLUTION. WE DO NOT SEE HOW A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT CAN BE ARRIVED AT WITHOUT THE FULL PARTICIPATION AND AGREEMENT OF THE GVN. TO REFUSE TO TALK WITH THE GVN IN THE HOPE THAT IT WILL BE OVERTHROWN IS FUTILE AND ONLY DELAYS PEACE AND PROLONGS THE WAR. THEREFORE, THE NLF SHOULD ENTER INTO TALKS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM WITHOUT DELAY.

3. IF OUR PRESENCE AT THESE POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE HELPFUL, AND IF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE CONCERNED AGREE, WE WOULD BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE, ALONG WITH THREE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DRV, IF THAT WERE ALSO DESIRED.

4. I THEN SAID THAT I GATHERED FROM WHAT THO HAD SAID THIS MORNING THAT HE DID NOT ACCEPT THE FORMULA FOR PRIVATE MEETINGS WHICH I HAD PROPOSED EARLIER IN THE MEETING. THIS PROMPTED ME TO ASK THO IF THEY WERE ASKING THAT ALL FOUR OF US MEET IN PRIVATE SESSIONS AT WHICH ALL QUESTIONS RELATED TO A SETTLEMENT COULD BE DISCUSSED. I SAID THAT I THEREFORE PROPOSED AS AN ALTERNATIVE THAT DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES, THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM AND THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT MEET TOGETHER IN PRIVATE SESSIONS. IN SUCH SESSIONS EITHER SIDE COULD RAISE ANY SUBJECT IT WISHED.

5. I POINTED OUT THAT IN PROCEEDING TO SUCH PRIVATE TALKS WE WISHED TO KEEP OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF BILATERAL US/DRV TALKS WHENEVER EITHER OF US HAS A MATTER OF COMMON INTEREST TO RAISE. I SAID THAT THAT CONCLUDED MY STATEMENT BUT I WOULD LIKE TO ASK AGAIN IF HE WAS ASKING THAT ALL FOUR OF US MEET IN PRIVATE SESSIONS AT WHICH ALL MATTERS RELATED TO A SETTLEMENT COULD BE DISCUSSED.

6. THO SAID HE WISHED TO REPLY. HE SAID THAT I DID NOT ACCEPT HIS STATEMENT THAT THE UNITED STATES IS THE AGGRESSOR AND A NEO-COLONIALIST POWER. THE FACTS ARE THE FACTS, HE SAID, BUT HE DID NOT WANT TO ARGUE ABOUT THEM HERE BECAUSE MINISTER XUAN THUY HAS SPOKEN AT LENGTH ON THIS SUBJECT FOR ONE YEAR. SIMILARLY, THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION WAS SET UP BY THE UNITED STATES OR NOT IS ALSO ONE WHICH BOTH HE AND THUY HAD SPOKEN ABOUT. THO SAID HE WAS SURE THAT IN

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THE FUTURE VIETNAMESE HISTORIANS WOULD NEVER SPEAK ABOUT THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION IN TERMS THAT I HAD DESCRIBED IT. HE SAID HE WAS SURE THAT VIETNAMESE HISTORIANS OF FUTURE GENERATIONS, NOT ONLY HIS CHILDREN, BUT HIS CHILDREN'S CHILDREN WOULD NOT SPEAK ABOUT THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION OR ANY OF THE OTHER QUESTIONS WE HAD DISCUSSED IN THE WAY THAT I HAD. SO MUCH, THO SAID, FOR THE ARGUMENT.

75. AS FOR THE QUESTION OF HOW TO ORGANIZE THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE, THO CONTINUED, THE DRV WANTS TO SETTLE THE VIETNAMESE PROBLEM PEACEFULLY AND IT HAS PUT FORWARD PROPOSALS. HOW SHOULD THE CONFERENCE BE ORGANIZED? THERE IS ONE POINT, THO SAID. THE NLF DOES NOT ACCEPT THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION AS AN ADMINISTRATION WHICH IS PREPARED TO SEEK A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT FOR THE SIMPLE REASON THAT HE HAD ANALYZED PREVIOUSLY, THAT IS, THAT THE LEADERS OF THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION DO NOT WANT TO SETTLE THE WAR. WHAT THE DRV WANTED WAS A SAIGON ADMINISTRATION COMPOSED OF PEOPLE WHO REALLY DESIRE A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. NATURALLY, THIS ADMINISTRATION WOULD NOT INCLUDE THE NLF. THE NLF ALSO WANTS TO SEE IN THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION PEOPLE WHO REALLY WANT SERIOUS TALKS FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

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RECD: May 31, 1969
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SECRET SECTION 9 OF 11 PARIS 8112

NODIS/PARIS MEETINGS/PLUS

DELTO 1793.

SUBJECT: REPORT OF MEETING WITH LE DUC THO AND HA VAN LAU

SAIGON DELIVER AT OPENING OF BUSINESS

76. THO SAID THAT THE PRESENT SAIGON ADMINISTRATION STIFLES EVERY MANIFESTATION OF FREEDOM AND LIBERTY AND SUCH AN ADMINISTRATION IS NOT ONLY OPPOSED BY THE NLF AND THE COMMUNISTS BUT BY ALL THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM, ALL POLITICAL PARTIES AND GROUPS, AND ALL THOSE WHO WANT PEACE AND NEUTRALITY. WITH SUCH AN ADMINISTRATION, TALKS CANNOT BRING ABOUT A SETTLEMENT. AS HE HAD SAID BEFORE, THE MAIN OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS AT THIS CONFERENCE (NOW) IS THE THIEU/KY/HUONG ADMINISTRATION AND WITHOUT SOLVING THE QUESTION OF THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION IT WAS DIFFICULT TO TALK ABOUT HOW TO ORGANIZE THE CONFERENCE.

Expectation

77. THEREFORE, THO SAID, HE DID NOT PROPOSE PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH ALL FOUR PARTIES BECAUSE THE FRONT DOES NOT ACCEPT THIS AND THE DRV AGREES WITH THE FRONT'S ATTITUDE. THAT, THO SAID, WAS HIS ANSWER TO MY QUESTION ABOUT PRIVATE MEETINGS BETWEEN THE FOUR PARTIES AND THAT WAS WHAT HE HAD TO SAY TO US.

78. THO ADDED THAT WHENEVER WE HAD ANY QUESTIONS TO RAISE WITH THE DRV THEN WE WOULD PROPOSE MEETINGS AND THE DRV WAS PREPARED TO MEET WITH US AS WE HAD PREVIOUSLY.

79. IN REPLY, I SAID THAT IN INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE JUST TO DEAL WITH PEOPLE ONE LIKES AND AGREES WITH. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM IS HERE AND READY TO NEGOTIATE. IT IS A PRACTICAL FACT THAT THEY ARE THE LARGEST AND MOST IMPORTANT ENTITY IN SOUTH VIETNAM. I PRESUMED THAT THE FACT THAT THE DRV AND NLF AGREED TO HAVE THE GVN SIT AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE WAS A SIGN OF THEIR RECOGNITION THAT THE GVN WAS INDEED A GOING CONCERN.

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80. I SAID THAT THE GVN HAD COME HERE TO SEEK A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GVN ARE PREPARED TO DISCUSS ISSUES WITHOUT PRIOR CONDITIONS. THE PURPOSE OF NEGOTIATIONS IS TO DEAL WITH THE ISSUES. EITHER SIDE SHOULD BE FREE TO RAISE ANY ISSUE IT WISHES. IF THE DRV DOESN'T AGREE TO MEETINGS OF ALL FOUR REPRESENTATIVES, THEN I SUGGESTED THAT THEY RECONSIDER MY PROPOSAL THAT WE MEET TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF DIRECT CONCERN TO THE UNITED STATES AND THE DRV, SUCH AS THE WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH VIETNAM OF NON-SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES. THE FRONT COULD MEET WITH THE GVN TO DISCUSS ASPECTS OF A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. THAT IS A MATTER FOR THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE TO DECIDE AND PRESIDENT THIEU HAS INDICATED HIS READINESS TO DO THIS. I ASKED THO IF THEY WOULD PREFER THAT KIND OF PROCEDURE.

81. THO SAID THAT HE REALIZED THAT THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION EXISTED IN SOUTH VIET-NAM AND THAT IT WAS A PRACTICAL REALITY. HE SAID THAT WE MUST ALSO RECOGNIZE THE NLF AS THE MAIN REALITY FOR THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM. NEITHER THE DRV NOR THE FRONT ACCEPT THE WARLIKE AND DICTATORIAL THIEU/KY/HUONG ADMINISTRATION WHICH REVERES HITLER AS THEIR MASTER. THE UNITED STATES WANTS THE DRV AND THE NLF TO SIT WITH THAT. NOW, ASKED THO, COULD THEY DISCUSS A SETTLEMENT WITH SUCH PEOPLE, AND EVEN IF THEY DID IT WOULD NOT SETTLE PROBLEMS.

82. I REPLIED THAT THEY HAD BEEN SITTING WITH THEM SINCE JANUARY. WHAT IT BOILED DOWN TO WAS THAT NEITHER WE NOR THE GVN REFUSED TO DEAL WITH THE NLF BUT THEIR SIDE REFUSED TO DEAL WITH THE GVN UNDER ANY CONDITIONS. THAT WAS NOT NEGOTIATION. THEY COULD SAY THAT THE GVN LIKED HITLER AND I COULD THINK OF SOME DREADFUL THINGS TO SAY ABOUT THE NLF, BUT SUCH TALK GETS US NOWHERE.

83. THO REPLIED THAT WHAT I HAD SAID WAS NOT CORRECT BECAUSE ONE COULD NOT COMPARE THE CRIMES OF THIEU/KY/HUONG WITH THE JUST STRUGGLE OF THE NLF. THE WORLD AND THE US PEOPLE KNEW THIS, AND SUBJECTIVE IDEAS COULD NOT CHANGE THIS TRUTH. THO SAID HE THOUGHT THE DESIRE OF THE NLF WAS TO TALK WITH A SAIGON ADMINISTRATION COMPOSED OF PEOPLE WITH GOODWILL WHO WANT TO TALK SERIOUSLY. NOW, THO ASKED, COULD WE HAVE FOUR PARTY MEETINGS WHEN THE NLF WAS NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION? PENDING THE FORMATION OF A SAIGON ADMINISTRATION COMPOSED OF PEOPLE WITH GOODWILL, PREPARED TO HOLD SERIOUS TALKS FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF THE PROBLEM. THE DRV AND US CAN MEET TO DISCUSS ALL PROBLEMS, THO SAID--NOT ONLY MILITARY PROBLEMS. THO SAID THAT WE SHOULD DISCUSS THE BROAD PRINCIPLES OF ALL PROBLEMS AND COME TO AGREEMENT. THE DRV AND THE US SHOULD MEET TO DISCUSS THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF ALL PROBLEMS, BUT WHILE THE DRV AND US COULD HOLD SUCH DISCUSSIONS ON ALL QUESTIONS, NO FINAL SETTLEMENT COULD COME WITHOUT THE EVENTUAL PARTICIPATION OF THE FRONT AND A SAIGON ADMINISTRATION COMPOSED OF PEOPLE WITH GOODWILL READY FOR A SETTLEMENT.

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84. I SAID THAT WE WERE NOT KING-MAKERS. WE DID NOT PUT THIEU INTO OFFICE AND WE CANNOT REMOVE HIM. HE WAS ELECTED AND IF HE RUNS FOR ELECTION AGAIN IN 1971 AND SOMEONE RUNS AGAINST HIM WHO IS MORE POPULAR, THEN HE WILL BE DEFEATED.

85. I SAID THAT IF WHAT THO WAS SAYING WAS THAT THEY WOULD NOT LODGE
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NEGOTIATE WITH THE GVN, THEN I DID NOT SEE HOW THEY COULD SAY THEY HAD COME TO PARIS WITH GOOD WILL ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS. IT WAS STILL A FACT THAT THEY HAD AGREED TO MEET WITH THE GVN AND NEGOTIATE. THE ISSUES ARE THERE AND WE SHOULD FIND A WAY TO NEGOTIATE ABOUT THEM. OTHERWISE IT WILL BECOME CLEAR THAT THEY ARE NOT SERIOUS ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS AND IT WOULD BE THEY WHO WOULD BE PROLONGING THE WAR. AS FOR WHAT CAN BE DISCUSSED, I SAID THAT ANY PARTY COULD RAISE ANY SUBJECT IT WISHES.

16. I CONTINUED BY SAYING THAT IN REGARD TO INTERNAL POLITICAL MATTERS, THE GVN IS AND MUST BE A PARTY TO SUCH QUESTIONS. WE ARE PREPARED TO MEET WITH THE DRV AS WE ALWAYS HAVE BEEN TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST AND I WAS SURE THAT MUCH COULD COME FROM SUCH DISCUSSIONS.

17. THO SAID THAT I STATED THAT WE HAD NOT SET UP THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION AND THE PEOPLE HAD ELECTED THESE KINGS. I REPLIED THAT I HAD SAID WE WERE NOT KING-MAKERS, NOT THAT THE PEOPLE HAD ELECTED "KINGS." THO CONTINUED BY SAYING THAT OUR STATEMENT WAS NOT IN KEEPING WITH REALITY. IT WAS INCORRECT TO SAY THAT THE DRV DOES NOT HAVE GOODWILL BECAUSE IT DOES NOT TALK WITH THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION. IF THO HAD MADE SUCH A STATEMENT IT WAS WITH THE INTENT OF CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR SERIOUS TALKS AND GOODWILL FOR A SETTLEMENT. THE DEMAND TO CHANGE THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION IS NOT PUT FORWARD SUBJECTIVELY BY THE NLF OR THE DRV. IT IS A DEMAND OF BROAD SECTIONS OF THE PEOPLE, PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT NLF AND EVEN THOSE WHO DO NOT AGREE WITH THE NLF. THO SAID THAT THEY COULD NOT REFUSE TO SUPPORT THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE.

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THO SAID THAT THEY RECOGNIZE THAT THE SETTLEMENT OF ALL PROBLEMS INVOLVED ALL FOUR PARTIES. HOWEVER, WHILE THE US IS NOT YET WILLING TO TALK WITH THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION REGARDING SUCH AGREEMENT ON THE PARTIES THE NLF, THO WAS PROPOSING THAT THE US AND THE DRV DISCUSS ALL PROBLEMS, NOT ONLY THE PROBLEM OF TROOP WITHDRAWAL AS WE HAD PROPOSED. NATURALLY, HE SAID, LATER ON ALL THESE PROBLEMS SHOULD BE DISCUSSED BY ALL PARTIES. OTHERWISE THE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE DRV AND THE US WILL NOT BE DEFINITIVE BECAUSE THEY DO NOT INCLUDE ALL PARTIES CONCERNED. THEREFORE, THO SAID, THE ONLY OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS IN THE CONFERENCE IS THE PRESENT SAIGON ADMINISTRATION FOR WHICH THE US HAS RESPONSIBILITY. WE SHOULD SEEK TO CHANGE THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION AND THE FUTURE ONE WILL NOT INCLUDE TRIEN/KY/HUONG. THO SAID THAT AFTER DRV AND US DISCUSS PROBLEMS, THE NLF AND THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION WOULD HAVE TO AGREE--BUT NOT THE PRESENT SAIGON ADMINISTRATION OF TRIEN/KY/HUONG.

9. THUS, THO CONTINUED, HE WAS REPEATING THIS DEMAND OF CHANGE OF THE PRESENT SAIGON ADMINISTRATION NOT AS A SUBJECTIVE ONE ON THE PART OF THE DRV AND NLF BUT AS ONE PUT FORWARD BY BROAD SECTIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM, INCLUDING THOSE WHO STAND FOR PEACE AND THOSE WHO DO NOT APPROVE OF THE NLF BUT WANT PEACE, NEUTRALITY AND INDEPENDENCE.

10. I SAID THAT I MUST DENY ANY RESPONSIBILITY EITHER FOR THE EXISTENCE OF THE GVN OR FOR THE PERSONNEL OF THE GOVERNMENT. MOREOVER, WE WOULD NOT, I SAID, EVEN KNOW HOW TO GET RID OF ANY INDIVIDUALS IN THE GVN EVEN IF WE WANTED -- WHICH WE DON'T. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM IS A REALITY. I TOLD THO THAT HE AND I WOULD NOT DISCUSS THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT REPRESENTS THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM BUT OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS HAD AGREED THAT THE DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE HELD AND THAT THE GVN WOULD BE THERE. THE NLF ALSO AGREED. ALL ARE HERE. NOW THE DRV HAS APPARENTLY CHANGED ITS POSITION AND SAYS THAT THEY AND THE US WILL NOT NEGOTIATE WITH THE GVN. THAT IS REALLY NOT INSISTENT NOR CONDUCTIVE TO A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.

11. I SAID THAT I WOULD LIKE TO TURN TO ANOTHER POINT AND AT WAS HIS SUGGESTION THAT THE US AND DRV MEET TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS. I SAID THAT I AGREED TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST WITH THEM AND I ASKED THO WHAT PROBLEMS HE SUGGESTED SHOULD BE DISCUSSED BY THE US AND DRV.

12. THO, APPARENTLY NETTLED BY WHAT I HAD SAID, SAID THAT WAS INCORRECT THAT THEY HAD CHANGED THEIR POSITION AND NO LONGER FAVORED FOUR-PARTY MEETINGS IN PARIS. HE SAID THAT WHAT THEY WANTED WAS TO SEE REPRESENTATIVES OF SAIGON STAND FOR THE PEOPLE AND FOR A SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEM. IT WAS NOT THAT THEY DID NOT ACCEPT A FOUR-PARTY CONFERENCE.

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93. THO SAID THAT I HAD SPOKEN AT LENGTH ABOUT THE CHARACTER OF THE THIEU/KY/HUONG ADMINISTRATION AND I HAD BEEN IN SAIGON A LONG TIME. HE SAID THAT IF I WAS REALISTIC I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT THE THIEU/KY/HUONG ADMINISTRATION. RECENTLY THIEU MADE

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STRENUOUS EFFORTS TO GATHER TOGETHER POLITICAL GROUPS. THE PRESS IN SAIGON HAS SPOKEN ABOUT THESE EFFORTS BY THIEU AND THEY MUST BE KNOWN TO US. THO SAID THAT IF WE STICK TO THE THIEU/KY/QUONG ADMINISTRATION WE WOULD MEET WITH GREATER POLITICAL FAILURE AND THIS WOULD BE THE GREATEST ERROR ON OUR PART.

94. THO SAID THAT THE SECOND QUESTION CONCERNED US/DRV TALKS. IN REGARD TO DISCUSSION BY THE US AND THE DRV, HE DID NOT INTEND TO INCLUDE ONLY QUESTIONS OF MUTUAL INTEREST. THE DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BE BASED ON THE 10-POINTS PUT FORWARD BY THE NLF. THO SAID THAT HE HAD PUT FORWARD VERY SERIOUS AND PRACTICAL PROPOSALS SO THAT THE CONFERENCE COULD PROGRESS. HE SAID THAT IF WE STICK TO OUR TORTUOUS ARGUMENTS, THEN NO SETTLEMENT COULD RESULT. HE PROPOSED THAT WE CAREFULLY STUDY WHAT HE HAD SAID TODAY AND SEEK SERIOUSLY A WAY TO REMOVE THE MAIN OBSTACLES TO THE CONFERENCE TO WHICH HE HAD REFERRED.

95. I SAID THAT I HAD READ EVERYTHING I COULD FIND ABOUT THE HISTORY ABOUT THESE PARIS MEETINGS AND THAT I HAD FOUND THAT WHEN THE DRV HAD AGREED TO COME TO PARIS IT HAD NOT SET ANY CONDITIONS ABOUT THE PERSONNEL OF THE GVN SUCH AS THOSE THO WAS SETTING NOW. THIS LOOKED LIKE SOMETHING NEW.

96. THO SAID THAT THROUGHOUT THE CONFERENCE THEY HAD ACCEPTED THE PRINCIPLE OF FOUR-PARTY TALKS. NOW THERE WERE NEW DEVELOPMENTS. THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION HAD SHOWN THEMSELVES TO BE PEOPLE WHO DO NOT WANT SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS, WHO REFUSE A COALITION GOVERNMENT AND WHO DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE NLF. THESE ARE NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND THE NLF CANNOT ACCEPT SUCH A GOVERNMENT. THO SAID THAT TODAY HE HAD SPOKEN A GREAT DEAL. HE PROPOSED THAT I STUDY ALL HE HAD SAID AND THAT THIS WAS A GOOD POINT AT WHICH TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

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97. I REPLIED I WOULD CONSIDER CAREFULLY WHAT HE HAD SAID AND HOPED THAT THEY WOULD DO LIKEWISE WHAT WE HAD SAID. I SAID THAT IT WAS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT PRESIDENT THIEU WAS READY TO MEET THE NLF AND DISCUSS ALL ISSUES WITH THEM.

98. IN CONCLUSION I SAID THAT I INTENDED TO LEAVE NEXT THURSDAY NIGHT AFTER THE PLENARY SESSION FOR WASHINGTON FROM WHERE I EXPECT TO GO TO ATTEND THE MIDWAY MEETING. I SAID THAT I EXPECTED TO SEE THE PRESIDENT AND HIGH OFFICIALS OF THE US GOVERNMENT. IF THO HAD ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSALS I HAD MADE HERE TODAY IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF HE LET ME KNOW THIS BEFORE I LEFT PARIS. I SAID THAT I AGREED AS USUAL THAT IF THERE WERE ANYTHING HE WISHED TO DISCUSS FURTHER WE WOULD MEET AGAIN.

99. THO SAID THAT HE WOULD STUDY CAREFULLY WHAT I SAID TODAY. HE SAID HE HAD NOTHING FURTHER TO SAY, AND AGREED THAT IF WE HAD ANYTHING FURTHER WE WOULD GET IN TOUCH.

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